

DESIGN GUIDELINES & STREETSCAPE PLAN



Adopted

February 14, 2006

by

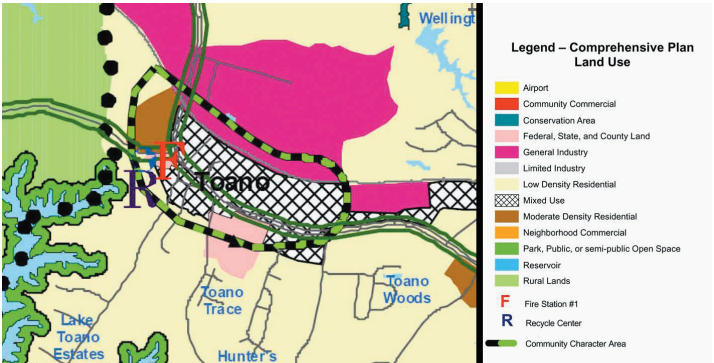
James City County
Board of Supervisors



RENAISSANCE PLANNING GROUP

BACKGROUND

The historic village of Toano sits along Route 60 in the northern part of James City County, between Anderson’s Corner and Norge. The village began as a railroad stop called Burnt Ordinary and in 1882 became know as Toano, a native American name for high ground. The extension of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway along the middle of the peninsula led to the rapid expansion of the town as a commercial center for the northern part of the county. Industries which relied upon the railroad emerged along the Richmond Road corridor. With the expansion of the automobile in the 20th century, Richmond Road replaced the railroad as the primary conduit of goods and people through the village. The expansion of Richmond Road through the town in the 1950’s eliminated many of the historic buildings in the village, particularly along the south side of the highway.

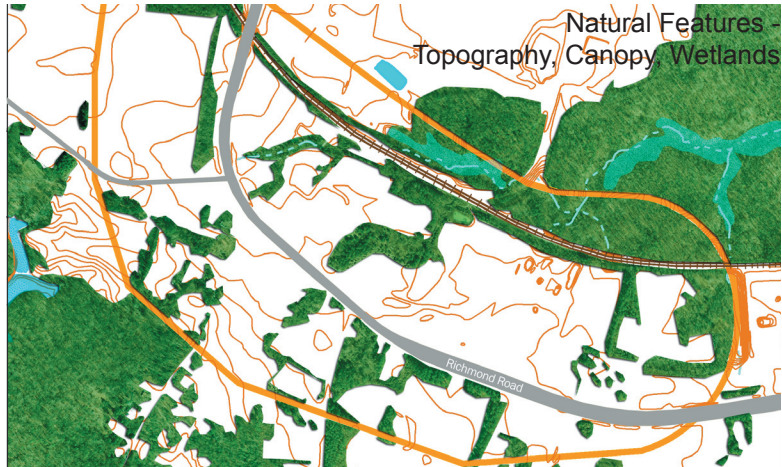


2003 Land Use Map for Toano

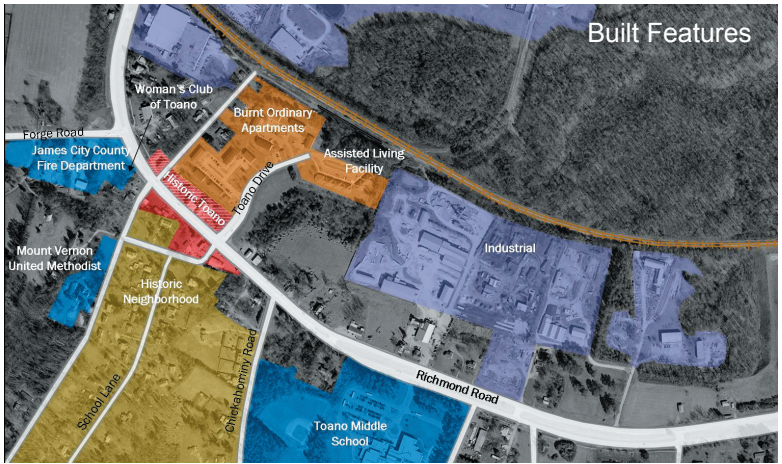
The 2003 Comprehensive Plan for James City County designates historic Toano as a Community Character Area. It calls for the architecture, scale, materials, and spacing of buildings to complement the historic character of the area. These guidelines and streetscape plan are the products of a steering committee convened to develop specific recommendations guiding the future development of the village while enhancing its historic character.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Toano is situated along the ridge line that Richmond Road follows. North of Richmond Road, water flows to an intermittent stream and out into the York River watershed. South of Richmond Road, water flows to the Little Creek Reservoir and down to the Chickahominy River watershed. Along Richmond Road through town there are few existing mature stands of canopy trees. Mature canopy stands instead are found near the low lying floodplains.



Toano is characterized by a central historic district on Richmond Road between Forge Road and Toano Drive. Beyond this district lies a historic neighborhood to the south, with Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church and more recent housing to the north - Burnt Ordinary Apartments and Assisted Living facility. Other facilities in the town include Toano Middle School, James City County Fire Department and Emergency Operations Building, and the Women’s Club of Toano. Much of the remainder of the town consists of industrial uses.



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The following principles were developed in consultation with the Toano Community Character Area Steering Committee as well as members of the public. The principles form the foundation for the following streetscape and design guidelines.

- 1. Highlight and honor history
- 2. Encourage appropriate growth that enhances unique small town character
- 3. Preserve open space; establish communal green space
- 4. Enhance pedestrian and bicycle environment while slowing vehicular traffic
- 5. Improve streetscape and landscape to create a sense of place

James City County has several policies in place that help to guide the development of Toano. These are included in the following lists under Community Character Areas and Streetscape Guidelines Policy.

Community Character Areas

(from 2003 Comprehensive Plan)

- 1. Promote rear-access parking
- 2. Design and maintain appropriate landscaping
- 3. Develop consistent signage
- 4. Ensure pedestrian & bicycle access
- 5. Promote mixed-use development
- 6. Provide open space

Streetscape Guidelines Policy

(Adopted April 2004)

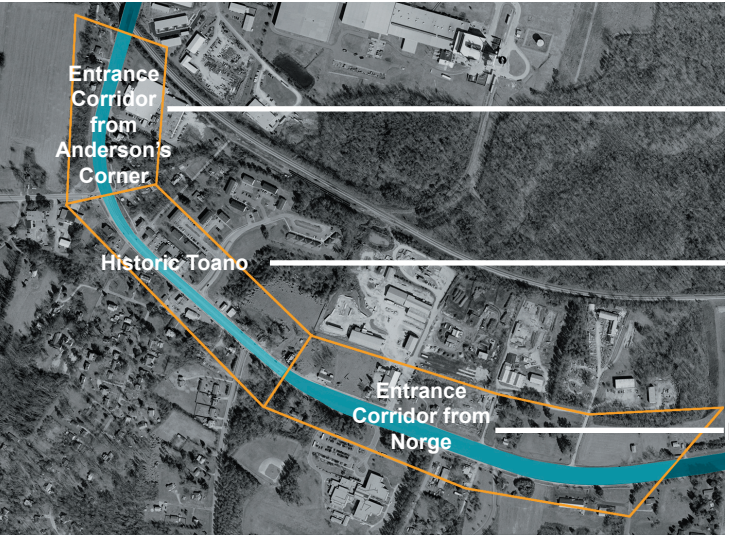
- 1. Preserve or establish tree canopies of 20% within 20 years growing time
- 2. A five foot landscape easement along a Right of Way must contain at least 1 tree per 40’ or 1 shrub per 20’
- 3. Native species or common street trees are recommended
- 4. Existing trees within 20’ of the Right of Way are protected by the zoning ordinance

COMMUNITY CHARACTER STUDY

The expansion of Richmond Road through the center of Toano resulted in the removal of buildings that once formed the town’s center. The community is eager to rebuild their town in the character of a village, where their collective goals include creating a safe and vibrant place to live, work, and visit.

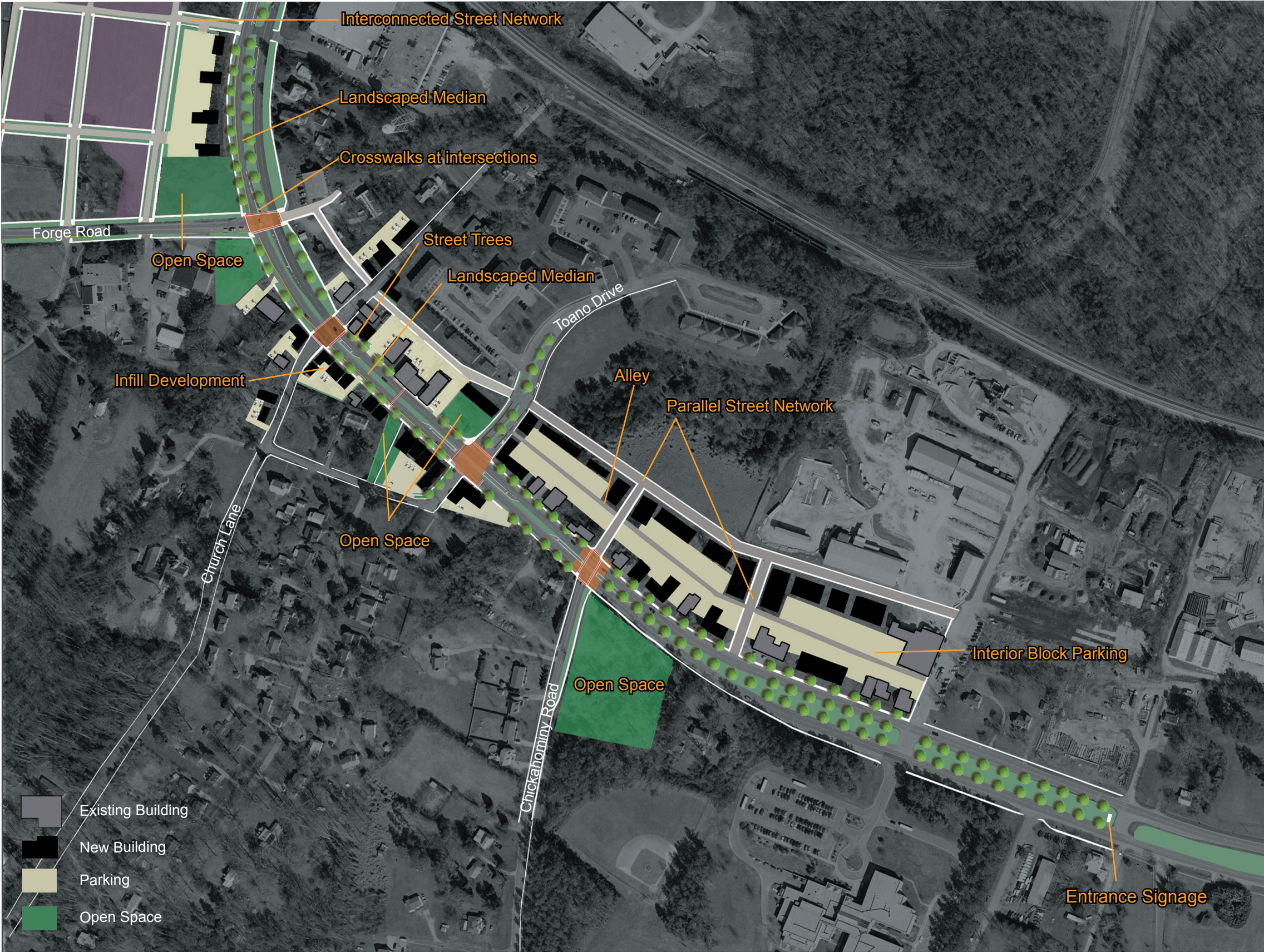
Three zones were selected by the committee for consideration in The Toano Community Character study: The Entrance Corridor from Anderson’s Corner, Historic Toano, and The Entrance Corridor from Norge. Designs for each zone are based on the general concept of realizing a more defined town center and edge.

Key Toano Areas Studied



The proposed Streetscape Plan (included on pages 4 and 5) provides a framework for creating and maintaining a sense of place in Toano. Through the careful redesign of the public realm along Richmond Road, a pattern of development emerges that should guide future investment. The creation of a street network adjacent and parallel to Richmond Road allows a finer grain of density to develop and contributes to the village-like feel. Additionally, this network begins to draw development and interest into side streets and neighborhoods. Through design elements such as street trees, building massing and orientation, landscaping, crosswalks, and a network of open space, the fingerprint of a vibrant place can emerge. Toano’s future should be informed but not constrained by its past while enhancing its unique character.

PROPOSED STREETScape PLAN



ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

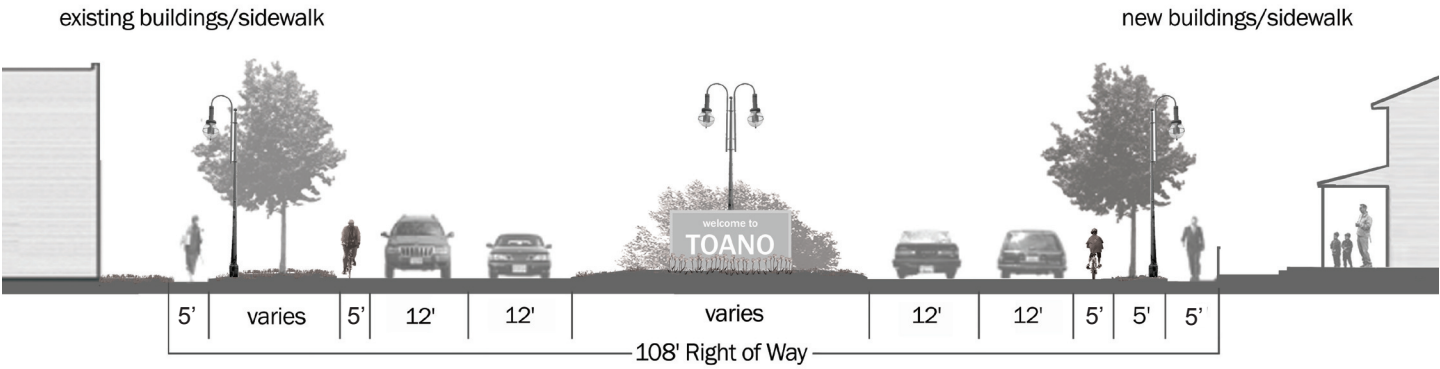


- Historic Toano**
- Buildings should be set back 10-15'. Massing should be denser in this area of Toano, with limited side yard setbacks of 0-5'.
 - Projects should have a consistent and distinct identity through the use of similar and compatible architecture and building materials. Predominant exterior materials should be of high quality, including wood, and brick. Buildings should be of similar size and design as the three existing main street buildings (Old Bank, Masonic Lodge, and Old Antique Store buildings), or other buildings previously located in this area of a similar age when their designs can be documented, as well as have architectural characteristics sensitive to and compatible with design elements of the nearby historic buildings, including: The Gatewood House, Silver Maple Café, and the Unfinished Wood Furniture Store.
 - Desired elements include two and three story buildings, windows on all floors, 1st or 2nd story porches.
 - Landscaping should consist predominantly of street trees, foundation plantings, and parking areas; fences and walls should be used to screen objectionable features such as mechanical equipment and dumpsters.
 - These guidelines are highly recommended for all parcels fronting on Richmond Road, and recommended for back parcels inside the Community Character Area

- Transition Areas** (also for Forge, Chickahominy, and Toano Drive transitions leading away from Richmond Road)
- Building setbacks of 15-25 feet.
 - Buildings should be of a lesser scale than those directly along the historic Toano corridor, with building heights of one and a half and two stories.
 - Building density and massing should decrease as well, with side yard setbacks increasing to 10-15 feet.
 - Landscaping should focus on berms and buffers between the edge of the village and the rural lands or industrial uses, while landscaping along the internal roads should still focus on streetscapes and integration of the village area. Parking behind the buildings should still be screened with plantings, but can include a mix of on-street parking if the road width is wide enough to support it.
 - These guidelines are recommended for business and residential uses fronting on Richmond Road, and suggested for all other uses and back parcels.

- In Between Towns** (Outskirts of Community Character Area and in between towns)
- Building setbacks and buffers should increase in this section to more closely mirror the Comprehensive Plan designations for this area, as parcels in this section encompass more industrial, low-density residential, and agricultural uses.
 - Building scale and density is more readily dependent on land use, rather than the Toano historic district guidelines.
 - Dominant features inside these areas should include more extensive buffering and landscape screening of these uses from Route 60.

Entrance Corridor from Anderson’s Corner - Richmond Road



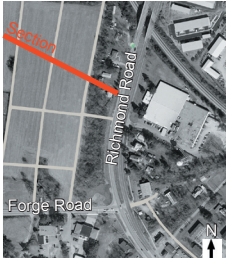
Concerns	Goals
Traffic Speed	Lower the speed limit in the transitional zone
Infrastructure	Create additional access to and from any proposed Forge Road development to Richmond Road; Introduce a traffic signal at the intersection of Forge Road and Richmond Road; Develop infrastructure before growth, not as a reaction
Gateway into Toano	Provide design elements that reinforce a sense of arrival
Pedestrian/bike access	Promote walking and biking with safe, improved sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes and sidewalk buffers
Character	Maintain an agricultural character by screening development with landscape and buffers; Create a town edge by increasing building setbacks and decreasing overall density

DESIGN ELEMENTS - TRANSITION ZONES



- Planted Median** - The transition from town center to town edge is enhanced by the introduction of trees in the median. In this corridor, visibility across the median becomes less important as the number of pedestrian crossings decrease.
- Gateway** - The median also acts as a space for the display of gateway elements such as signs, pedestrian-scale lighting, and sculpture/art work which alerts drivers to their arrival into town. Designed welcome signage can also be used to reinforce the desired character of the town/village and can provide information about the town to visitors.
- Bike Lane** - A separate lane designated for bicycle traffic will help to reduce automobile traffic and will make the town and school more accessible to non-drivers.
- Sidewalks** - Wide, buffered sidewalks encourage walking to and from the town.
- Landscaped Berm** - Transitioning from Richmond Road to farmland on Forge Road, or to industry along the entrance corridor from Norge, berms or earth mounds could be employed as a visual edge or screen between different land uses. For year-round screening, berms should be planted with evergreen species and at a scale-appropriate density.
- Intersection** - A signalized intersection at Forge Road and Richmond Road will help to manage traffic and increase the overall safety for drivers, pedestrians, and bikers.

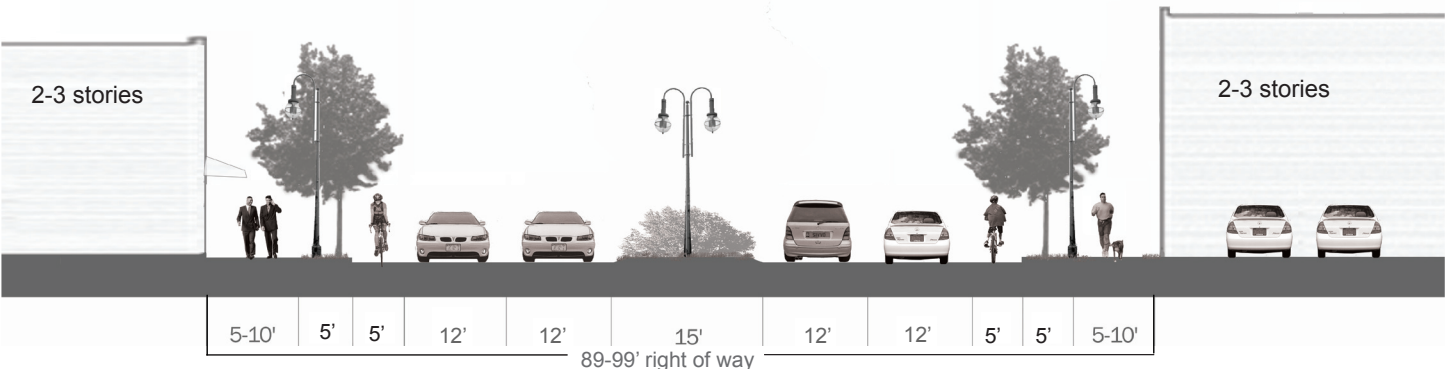
TRANSITIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Toano is primarily a rural/agricultural community, undergoing development pressure. The transition area North and South of Richmond Road should complement the character of the town center with smaller scale street-front buildings, rear entry parking, and pedestrian friendly design. Planning for new development should include the preservation of farm viewsheds and improved traffic management. Landscaped berms improve the visual continuity of farmland (example shown below) and act as a screen to adjacent or industrial development. New development should include a plan for multiple access routes and avoid overloading any single corridor.



Historic Toano, Richmond Road



Concerns	Goals
Traffic	Reduce the perceived scale of Richmond Road by employing streetscape design elements; Introduce traffic signals and clearly mark intersections
Pedestrian Access/Network	Encourage pedestrian activity through improved streetscape design including new sidewalks, bike lanes, sidewalk buffers, crosswalks, a planted median/refuge island, and short building setbacks
Economic/social vitality	Enhance the sense of place by increasing the density of mixed-use buildings in the village center. Designate points of interest to attract visitors and revitalize the downtown economy. Incorporate land for parks and open space.
Visual Beauty/character	Reinforce a village character with safe, walkable streets, landscaping and vernacular architecture; Preserve open space

DESIGN ELEMENTS - HISTORIC TOANO



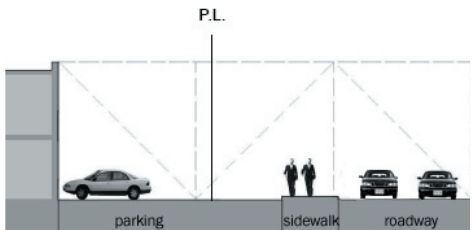
- Median** - Separate directional traffic. Provide a refuge island for safe pedestrian crossing. Reduce the perceived width of the roadway and reinforce the sense of place with landscaping, pedestrian-scale lighting, and signage.
- Crosswalk** - Highlight and designate specific areas for pedestrian crossing. Use texture and color to alert and slow drivers. Connect crosswalk with network of sidewalks for full pedestrian access.
- Landscape Buffers** - Promote sidewalk safety by providing grass buffer strips between pedestrian and highway traffic. Plant more street trees for shade, to add beauty to the streetscape, and to reinforce the distinction between the street and the sidewalk.
- Sidewalk** - Create a clear and safe zone for pedestrians that links to a network of crosswalks and sidewalks. Improve the current condition of the sidewalks and provide ample width to encourage pedestrian activity.
- Bike Lane** - Encourage bicycling as an alternate means of transportation. Provide a clearly defined lane for bikes with connections to a network.

Richmond Road Enhancement

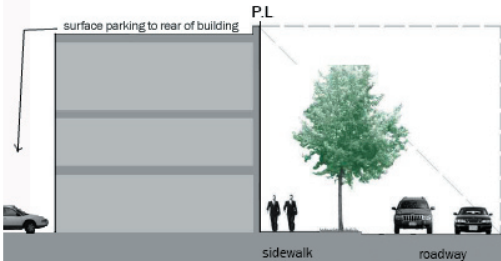


BUILDING FRONTAGE AND PARKING

Promote a village town atmosphere where pedestrian activity is encouraged and served by a network of safe sidewalks and crosswalks that pass before building entrances. Activate the town center by increasing building density and height (up to three stories). Encourage shorter building setbacks with entry access from the sidewalk. Restrict parking to the side or rear of buildings. Access parking from Richmond Road at designated locations, and create alternative access to lots from back-alley roads.

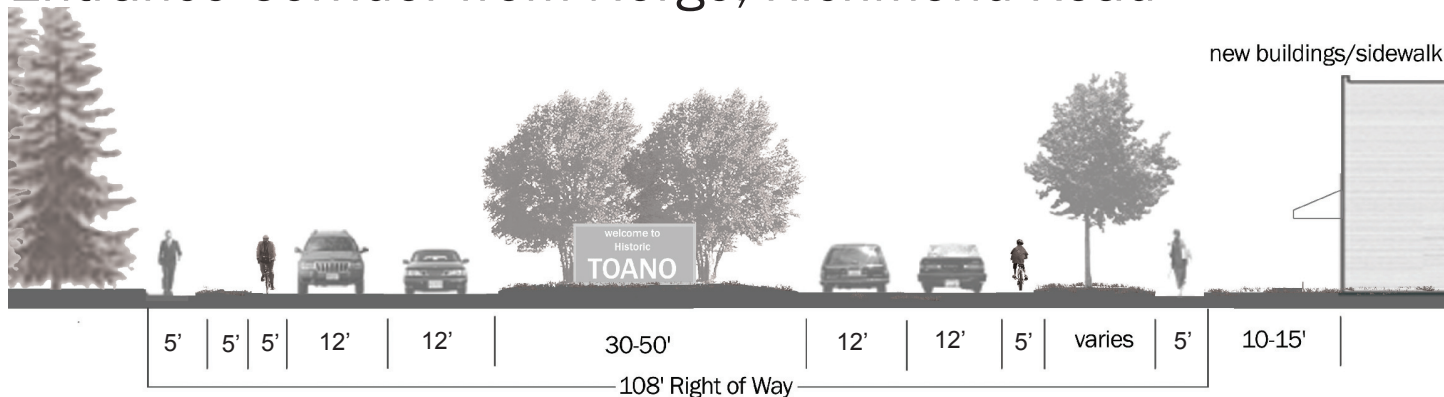


Discourages pedestrian activity



Parking behind the buildings promotes a pedestrian friendly streetscape

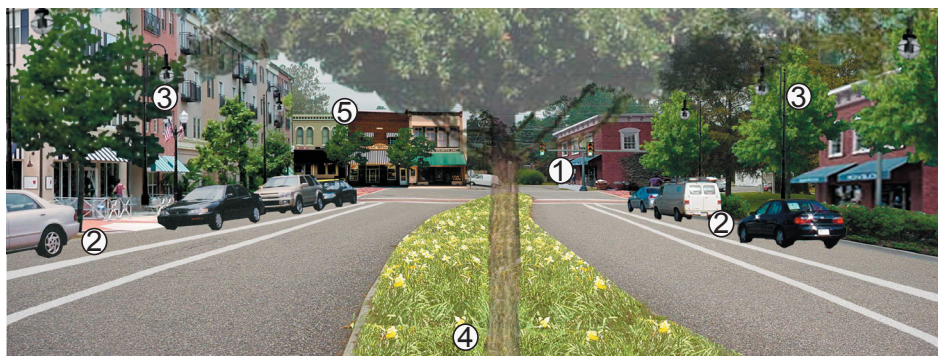
Entrance Corridor from Norge, Richmond Road



Concerns	Goals
Traffic Speed	Lower the speed of traffic entering town through signage, median plantings, street trees, sidewalks and shallow building setbacks
Gateway into Toano	Reinforce the sense of arrival through signage and other design elements
Development Pattern	Provide a framework of infrastructure (parallel streets, alleys, blocks) that extends the built pattern of the historic center in an incremental fashion as the village grows
Visual Beauty/character	Reinforce a village character with safe, walkable streets, landscaping, shallow building setbacks and vernacular architecture. Preserve open space where appropriate for future needs

Note: Design elements for "Entrance Corridor from Norge" are consistent with those listed under "TRANSITION ZONE" - page 6.

OTHER DESIGN ELEMENTS - TOANO DRIVE



Toano Drive and Richmond Road Intersection Enhancement



- 1. Traffic Signal & Crosswalks** - Provide a signal which would slow down through traffic while allowing pedestrians to safely cross the highway at designated crosswalks.
- 2. Bicycle Lanes & On-Street Parking** - Use the existing wide section of Toano Dr. to provide for on-street parking and a bike lane in both directions. This helps narrow the street and slows down traffic while providing alternatives to surface parking lots.
- 3. Street Trees & Lighting** - Create a safe and comfortable walking environment through pedestrian scale lighting and shade, which also helps to break down the scale of the street.
- 4. Landscape Median** - Help to create a sense of place through well-maintained landscape in the public realm of the median.
- 5. Infill Development** - Encourage mixed-use development that follows the pattern found in historic Toano. Buildings should be 2 to 3 stories and pushed to the street edge with entrances onto the sidewalk.

JOINT DEVELOPMENT

There are sections of the study area where it will be very difficult to develop on a small scale and still achieve the study's goals. Where there are key parcels surrounded by small or uniquely shaped parcels that, unless developed simultaneously, do not lend themselves to the vision of the study (interconnected roadways, rear-access parking areas), those parcels should be planned jointly, in order to achieve the goals presented in the design guidelines. Particularly for rezonings and special use permits, developers are encouraged to provide illustrative plans that incorporate adjoining parcels. Development of a parcel in a manner that would preclude development of another parcel consistent with these goals should be discouraged. In some cases, particularly for areas made up of small parcels, like the ones included on the south side of the Historic Richmond Road corridor, the County would likely need to participate in the development of the illustrative plan.

